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SUBJECT: TURKEY WILL SIGN THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Nudged by the EU, and seeking greater influence in post-Kyoto negotiations, the GOT announced on June 2 that it would begin a process to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. The GOT hopes the parliament will approve the ratification before its July recess, clearing the way for Turkey to participate in the UN Climate Change Convention in December 2008 as a member of the Protocol. Turkey has been dissatisfied sitting at the margins of previous conferences and wants to carve out a more robust role in setting the implementation mechanisms for Kyoto. Turkey seeks to define a "special status" as an Annex I country and will likely seek relief from Annex I emission reduction targets. Accession to Kyoto furthers Turkey's EU candidacy through closer harmonization with the EU's environmental policies. End summary.

¶2. (U) Following the June 2 Cabinet meeting, GOT spokesman Cemil Cicek announced that Turkey will join the Kyoto Protocol and will send a bill for ratification to parliament shortly. Cicek's announcement follows a similar announcement made on May 30 by Environment Minister Veysel Eroglu.

Why join Kyoto?

¶3. (SBU) There are several political and economic reasons why Turkey has decided to ratify the Protocol. Perhaps the most important is Turkey's determination to influence the negotiations for a post-Kyoto framework. At the last UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007, the GOT felt isolated and marginalized, mainly because it is not a member of any negotiating block. Cicek argued that joining Kyoto now would give Turkey the influence and stature it needs to favorably shape post-Kyoto implementation measures.

Kyoto as Part of EU Accession

¶4. (SBU) Another important factor in Turkey's decision to join Kyoto is its bid to join the EU. In recent trips to Ankara, French Negotiator for Climate Change Brice Lalonde and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband have raised climate change with high-level GOT counterparts. Under the auspices of the EU Presidency, the French have offered to host a symposium in Turkey to examine Turkey's claim for "special status" and how it can play a more influential role in the post-2012 negotiations. Similarly, the Brits have offered a "strategic dialogue" with Turkey on climate change with a kick-off event planned for fall.

¶5. (SBU) In public remarks, TGNA Environment Committee Chair Haluk Ozdalga cited the link between Turkey's EU candidacy and its desire to join Kyoto. He noted that no European country besides Turkey has declined to ratify Kyoto. He also mentioned the importance of Turkey joining one of the negotiating blocks to gain influence in the process. Gole told us Turkey had not made a decision but is considering joining the Balkan Group. According to French Commercial Attach Sylvain Geranton, the EU is considering whether to form a group of EU aspirant countries which would give countries like Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, etc. a way to link into EU processes. Ozdalga also mentioned the opportunity costs for Turkey

of not joining Kyoto. He said Turkey was missing out while China was benefiting from sizable funding available through Clean Development Mechanisms for investments in reduced carbon emissions.

Kyoto Shows GOT Action on Climate Change

¶16. (SBU) Local press commented that the GOT decided to approve the Kyoto Protocol as result of the personal efforts of Environment Minister Veysel Eroglu, who reportedly lobbied Cabinet counterparts.

Ministry of Environment Acting Department Head for International Relations Deniz Gole told us public opinion sees the drought conditions in southeastern Turkey as tied to global warming, and the GOT's decision on Kyoto is a way for the government to show it is taking action on this issue.

GOT Accession Process...

¶17. (SBU) The GOT's announcement to join the Protocol is just the first in a multi-step process for Turkey's accession to Kyoto. The MFA is now tasked with preparing a draft law which will require the signature of all GOT ministers before submission to parliament. The law will be debated by the foreign affairs committee and the subcommittee on environment. It may also go to the plans and budget committee as well as energy committee. Following a vote by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), the law will be submitted to the President for his approval.

....And Timing

¶18. (SBU) Once Turkey deposits its ratification instrument with the UN, there is a 90-waiting period before the formal accession is recognized. Turkey's decision to move now on Kyoto ratification seems to be driven by its determination to become a voice at the table at the next United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled for December in Poznan, Poland. In order to make this timing work, the TGNA will need to vote in favor of the Protocol prior to the TNGA's summer recess, which begins in July.

Cost of Kyoto Accession?

¶19. (SBU) Not everyone agrees that Turkey's accession to the Protocol is positive. The Ministry of Industry has raised concerns about the cost to the economy of implementing the Protocol. Analyses we have seen suggest that cement, iron, steel and other heavy industries would likely incur substantial costs to cut carbon emissions. Analysts estimated the impact on the Turkish economy could reach USD 5 billion.

Special Status Exemption from Costs

¶10. (SBU) In response to arguments of economic harm, Cicek said there would be no cost now for Turkey to join because emissions reductions will not be implemented until post-2012. Gole told us Turkey will continue to seek a "special status" under Annex I after it has ratified the Protocol. It is not clear what specifically is meant by a special status. Most likely, Turkey will seek exemptions from carbon emission reduction requirements for Annex I countries.